

EVANGELINE



900

BETTIE





Evangeline  
A Tale of Acadie









# EVANGELINE



*Henry  
Wadsworth  
Longfellow*

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# Evangeline

## A Tale of Acadie

### PART THE FIRST

**T**HIS is the forest primeval. The  
murmuring pines and the hem-  
locks,

Bearded with moss, and in garments  
green, indistinct in the twilight,  
Stand like Druids of old, with voices  
sad and prophetic,  
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards  
that rest on their bosoms.

Loud from its rocky cavern, the deep-  
voiced neighbouring ocean  
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate an-  
swers the wail of the forest.

This is the forest primeval; but where  
are the hearts that beneath it  
Leaped like the roe, when he hears in  
the woodland the voice of the hunts-  
man?  
Where is the thatch-roofed village, the  
home of Acadian farmers,—  
Men whose lives glided on like rivers  
that water the woodlands,  
Darkened by shadows of earth, but re-  
flecting an image of heaven?  
Waste are those pleasant farms, and the  
farmers for ever departed!  
Scattered like dust and leaves, when the  
mighty blasts of October

## Evangeline \*

Seize them, and whirl them aloft, and  
sprinkle them far o'er the ocean.  
Nought but tradition remains of the  
beautiful village of Grand-Pré.

Ye who believe in affection that hopes,  
and endures, and is patient,  
Ye who believe in the beauty and  
strength of woman's devotion,  
List to the mournful tradition still sung  
by the pines of the forest;  
List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home  
of the happy.

### I.

In the Acadian land, on the shores of  
the Basin of Minas,  
Distant, secluded, still, the little village  
of Grand-Pré

⌘ Evangeline

Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to the eastward,  
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks without number.  
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with labour incessant,  
Shut out the turbulent tides; but at stated seasons the flood-gates Opened, and welcomed the sea to wander at will o'er the meadows.  
West and south there were fields of flax, and orchards and cornfields Spreading afar and unfenced o'er the plain; and away to the northward Blomidon rose, and the forests old, and aloft on the mountains Sea-fogs pitched their tents, and mists from the mighty Atlantic Looked on the happy valley, but ne'er from their station descended.

## Evangeline \*

There, in the midst of its farms, re-  
posed the Acadian village.

Strongly built were the houses, with  
frames of oak and of chestnut,  
Such as the peasants of Normandy built  
in the reign of the Henries.

Thatched were the roofs, with dormer-  
windows; and gables projecting  
Over the basement below protected and  
shaded the door-way.

There in the tranquil evenings of sum-  
mer, when brightly the sunset  
Lighted the village street, and gilded the  
vanes on the chimneys,  
Matrons and maidens sat in snow-white  
caps and in kirtles  
Scarlet and blue and green, with distaffs  
spinning the golden  
Flax for the gossiping looms, whose noisy  
shuttles within doors

※ Evangeline

Mingled their sound with the whir of  
the wheels and the songs of the  
maidens.

Solemnly down the street came the parish  
priest, and the children  
Paused in their play to kiss the hand he  
extended to bless them.

Reverend walked he among them; and  
up rose matrons and maidens,  
Hailing his slow approach with words of  
affectionate welcome.

Then came the labourers home from the  
field, and serenely the sun sank  
Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed.

Anon from the belfry  
Softly the Angelus sounded, and over  
the roofs of the village  
Columns of pale blue smoke, like clouds  
of incense ascending,

## Evangeline \*

Rose from a hundred hearths, the homes  
of peace and contentment.

Thus dwelt together in love these simple  
Acadian farmers,—

Dwelt in the love of God and of man.  
Alike were they free from

Fear, that reigns with the tyrant, and  
envy, the vice of republics.

Neither locks had they to their doors, nor  
bars to their windows;

But their dwellings were open as day  
and the hearts of the owners;

There the richest was poor, and the  
poorest lived in abundance.

Somewhat apart from the village, and  
nearer the Basin of Minas,  
Benedict Bellefontaine, the wealthiest  
farmer of Grand-Pré,

¶ Evangeline

Dwelt on his goodly acres ; and with him,  
    directing his household,

Gentle Evangeline lived, his child, and  
    the pride of the village.

Stalworth and stately in form was the  
    man of seventy winters ;

Hearty and hale was he, an oak that is  
    covered with snow-flakes ;

White as the snow were his locks, and his  
    cheeks as brown as the oak-leaves.

Fair was she to behold, that maiden of  
    seventeen summers.

Black were her eyes as the berry that  
    grows on the thorn by the way-side,

Black, yet how softly they gleamed  
    beneath the brown shade of her  
    tresses !

Sweet was her breath as the breath of  
    the kine that feed in the meadows.

## Evangeline \*

When in the harvest heat she bore to the  
reapers at noontide

Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in  
sooth was the maiden.

Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn,  
while the bell from its turret

Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as  
the priest with his hyssop

Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters  
blessings upon them,

Down the long street she passed, with  
her chaplet of beads and her missal,

Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle  
of blue, and the ear-rings,

Brought in the olden time from France,  
and since, as an heirloom,

Handed down from mother to child,  
through long generations.

But a celestial brightness — a more  
ethereal beauty —

Shone on her face and encircled her form,  
when, after confession,  
Homeward serenely she walked with  
God's benediction upon her.  
When she had passed, it seemed like the  
ceasing of exquisite music.  
Firmly builded with rafters of oak, the  
house of the farmer  
Stood on the side of a hill command-  
ing the sea; and a shady  
Sycamore grew by the door, with a  
woodbine wreathing around it.  
Rudely carved was the porch, with seats  
beneath; and a footpath  
Led through an orchard wide, and dis-  
appeared in the meadow.  
Under the sycamore-tree were hives  
overhung by a penthouse,  
Such as the traveller sees in regions re-  
mote by the road-side,

## Evangeline \*

Built o'er a box for the poor, or the  
blessed image of Mary.

Farther down, on the slope of the hill,  
    was the well with its moss-grown  
Bucket, fastened with iron, and near it  
    a trough for the horses.

Shielding the house from storms, on the  
north, were the barns and the farm-  
yard.

There stood the broad-wheeled wains  
    and the antique ploughs and the  
harrows;

There were the folds for the sheep; and  
    there, in his feathered seraglio,  
Strutted the lordly turkey, and crowed  
    the cock, with the selfsame  
Voice that in ages of old had startled the  
    penitent Peter.

Bursting with hay were the barns, them-  
selves a village. In each one

\* Evangeline

Far o'er the gable projected a roof of  
thatch; and a staircase,  
Under the sheltering eaves, led up to the  
odorous corn-loft.  
There too the dove-cot stood, with its  
meek and innocent inmates  
Murmuring ever of love; while above  
in the variant breezes  
Numberless noisy weathercocks rattled  
and sang of mutation.

Thus, at peace with God and the  
world, the farmer of Grand-Pré  
Lived on his sunny farm, and Evan-  
geline governed his household.  
Many a youth, as he knelt in the church  
and opened his missal,  
Fixed his eyes upon her, as the saint of  
his deepest devotion;

## Evangeline \*

Happy was he who might touch her hand  
or the hem of her garment!

Many a suitor came to her door, by the  
darkness befriended,

And as he knocked and waited to hear  
the sound of her footsteps,

Knew not which beat the louder, his  
heart or the knocker of iron;

Or at the joyous feast of the Patron  
Saint of the village,

Bolder grew, and pressed her hand in the  
dance as he whispered

Hurried words of love, that seemed a  
part of the music.

But, among all who came, young Gabriel  
only was welcome;

Gabriel Lajeunesse, the son of Basil the  
blacksmith,

Who was a mighty man in the village,  
and honoured of all men;

For since the birth of time, throughout  
all ages and nations,  
Has the craft of the smith been held in  
repute by the people.  
Basil was Benedict's friend. Their chil-  
dren from earliest childhood  
Grew up together as brother and sister;  
and Father Felician,  
Priest and pedagogue both in the village,  
had taught them their letters  
Out of the selfsame book, with the  
hymns of the church and the plain-  
song.  
But when the hymn was sung, and the  
daily lesson completed,  
Swiftly they hurried away to the forge  
of Basil the blacksmith.  
There at the door they stood, with  
wondering eyes to behold him

## Evangeline \*

Take in his leathern lap the hoof of the  
horse as a plaything,  
Nailing the shoe in its place; while near  
him the tire of a cart-wheel  
Lay like a fiery snake, coiled round in a  
circle of cinders.  
Oft on autumnal eves, when without in  
the gathering darkness  
Bursting with light seemed the smithy,  
through every cranny and crevice,  
Warmed by the forge within they  
watched the labouring bellows,  
And as its panting ceased, and the sparks  
expired in the ashes,  
Merrily laughed, and said they were  
nuns going into the chapel.  
Oft on sledges in winter, as swift as the  
swoop of the eagle,  
Down the hill-side bounding, they glided  
away o'er the meadow.

Oft in the barns they climbed to the  
populous nests on the rafters,  
Seeking with eager eyes that wondrous  
stone, which the swallow  
Brings from the shore of the sea to re-  
store the sight of its fledglings;  
Lucky was he who found that stone in  
the nest of the swallow!  
Thus passed a few swift years, and they  
no longer were children.  
He was a valiant youth, and his face,  
like the face of the morning,  
Gladdened the earth with its light, and  
ripened thought into action.  
She was a woman now, with the heart  
and hopes of a woman.  
“Sunshine of Saint Eulalie” was she  
called; for that was the sunshine  
Which, as the farmers believed, would  
load their orchards with apples;

Evangeline \*

She, too, would bring to her husband's  
house delight and abundance,  
Filling it full of love and the ruddy faces  
of children.

\* Evangeline

II.

NOW had the season returned, when  
the nights grow colder and longer,  
And the retreating sun the sign of the  
Scorpion enters.

Birds of passage sailed through the leaden  
air, from the ice-bound,  
Desolate northern bays to the shores of  
tropical islands.

Harvests were gathered in; and wild  
with the winds of September  
Wrestled the trees of the forest, as Jacob  
of old with the angel.  
All the signs foretold a winter long and  
inclement.

## Evangeline \*

Bees, with prophetic instinct of want, had  
hoarded their honey  
Till the hives overflowed; and the Indian hunters asserted  
Cold would the winter be, for thick was  
the fur of the foxes.  
Such was the advent of autumn. Then  
followed that beautiful season,  
Called by the pious Acadian peasants  
the Summer of All-Saints!  
Filled was the air with a dreamy and  
magical light; and the landscape  
Lay as if new-created in all the freshness  
of childhood.  
Peace seemed to reign upon earth, and  
the restless heart of the ocean  
Was for a moment consoled. All sounds  
were in harmony blended.  
Voices of children at play, the crowing  
of cocks in the farm-yards,

\* Evangeline

Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and  
the cooing of pigeons,  
All were subdued and low as the mur-  
murs of love, and the great sun  
Looked with the eye of love through the  
golden vapours around him;  
While arrayed in its robes of russet and  
scarlet and yellow,  
Bright with the sheen of the dew, each  
glittering tree of the forest  
Flashed like the plane-tree the Persian  
adorned with mantles and jewels.  
Now recommenced the reign of rest and  
affection and stillness. ←  
Day with its burden and heat had de-  
parted, and twilight descending  
Brought back the evening star to the sky,  
and the herds to the homestead.  
Pawing the ground they came, and rest-  
ing their necks on each other,

## Evangeline \*

And with their nostrils distended inhaling  
the freshness of evening.

Foremost, bearing the bell, Evangeline's  
beautiful heifer,

Proud of her snow-white hide, and the  
ribbon that waved from her collar,  
Quietly paced and slow, as if conscious  
of human affection.

Then came the shepherd back with his  
bleating flocks from the sea-side,

Where was their favourite pasture. Behind  
them followed the watch-dog,  
Patient, full of importance, and grand  
in the pride of his instinct,

Walking from side to side with a lordly  
air, and superbly

Waving his bushy tail, and urging forward  
the stragglers;

Regent of flocks was he when the shepherd slept; their protector,

\* Evangeline

When from the forest at night, through  
the starry silence, the wolves  
howled.

Late, with the rising moon, returned  
the wains from the marshes,  
Laden with briny hay, that filled the air  
with its odour.

Cheerily neighed the steeds, with dew on  
their manes and their fetlocks,  
While aloft on their shoulders the  
wooden and ponderous saddles,  
Painted with brilliant dyes, and adorned  
with tassels of crimson,  
Nodded in bright array, like hollyhocks  
heavy with blossoms.  
Patiently stood the cows meanwhile, and  
yielded their udders  
Unto the milkmaid's hand; whilst loud  
and in regular cadence

## Evangeline \*

Into the sounding pails the foaming  
streamlets descended.  
Lowing of cattle and peals of laughter  
were heard in the farm-yard,  
Echoed back by the barns. Anon they  
sank into stillness;  
Heavily closed, with a creaking sound,  
the valves of the barn-doors,  
Rattled the wooden bars, and all for a  
season was silent.

Indoors, warm by the wide-mouthed  
fireplace, idly the farmer  
Sat in his elbow-chair, and watched how  
the flames and the smoke-wreaths  
Struggled together like foes in a burn-  
ing city. Behind him,  
Nodding and mocking along the wall,  
with gestures fantastic,

Darted his own huge shadow, and vanished away into darkness.  
Faces clumsily carved in oak, on the back of his arm-chair  
Laughed in the flickering light, and the pewter plates on the dresser  
Caught and reflected the flame, as shields of armies the sunshine.  
Fragments of song the old man sang, and carols of Christmas,  
Such as at home, in the olden time, his fathers before him  
Sang in their Norman orchards and bright Burgundian vineyards.  
Close at her father's side was the gentle Evangeline seated,  
Spinning flax for the loom, that stood in the corner behind her.  
Silent awhile were its treadles, at rest was its diligent shuttle,

## Evangeline \*

While the monotonous drone of the  
wheel, like the drone of a bagpipe,  
Followed the old man's song, and united  
the fragments together.

As in a church, when the chant of the  
choir at intervals ceases,  
Footfalls are heard in the aisles, or words  
of the priest at the altar,  
So, in each pause of the song, with  
measured motion the clock clicked.

Thus as they sat, there were foot-  
steps heard, and, suddenly lifted,  
Sounded the wooden latch, and the door  
swung back on its hinges.

Benedict knew by the hob-nailed shoes it  
was Basil the blacksmith,  
And by her beating heart Evangeline  
knew who was with him.

"Welcome!" the farmer exclaimed, as  
their footsteps paused on the thresh-  
old,

"Welcome, Basil, my friend! Come,  
take thy place on the settle

Close by the chimney-side, which is al-  
ways empty without thee;

Take from the shelf overhead thy pipe  
and the box of tobacco;

Never so much thyself art thou as when  
through the curling

Smoke of the pipe or the forge thy  
friendly and jovial face gleams

Round and red as the harvest-moon  
through the mist of the marshes."

Then, with a smile of content, thus  
answered Basil the blacksmith,

Taking with easy air the accustomed **seat**  
by the fireside:—

## Evangeline \*

“ Benedict Bellefontaine, thou hast ever  
thy jest and thy ballad!  
Ever in cheerfulest mood art thou, when  
others are filled with  
Gloomy forebodings of ill, and see only  
ruin before them.  
Happy art thou, as if every day thou  
hadst picked up a horseshoe.”  
Pausing a moment, to take the pipe that  
Evangeline brought him,  
And with a coal from the embers had  
lighted, he slowly continued:—  
“ Four days now are passed since the  
English ships at their anchors  
Ride in the Gaspereau’s mouth, with  
their cannon pointed against us.  
What their design may be is unknown;  
but all are commanded  
On the morrow to meet in the church,  
where his Majesty’s mandate

Will be proclaimed as law in the land.

Alas! in the mean time

Many surmises of evil alarm the hearts  
of the people."

Then made answer the farmer:—

"Perhaps some friendlier purpose  
Brings the ships to our shores. Per-  
haps the harvests in England  
By untimely rains or untimelier heat  
have been blighted,  
And from our bursting barns they would  
feed their cattle and children."

"Not so thinketh the folk in the vil-  
lage," said, warmly, the blacksmith,  
Shaking his head, as in doubt; then,  
heaving a sigh, he continued:—

"Louisburg is not forgotten, nor Beau  
Séjour, nor Port Royal.

Many already have fled to the forest,  
and lurk on its outskirts,

## Evangeline \*

Waiting with anxious hearts the dubious  
fate of to-morrow.

Arms have been taken from us, and  
warlike weapons of all kinds;

Nothing is left but the blacksmith's  
sledge and the scythe of the mower."

Then with a pleasant smile made answer  
the jovial farmer:

"Safer are we unarmed, in the midst  
of our flocks and our cornfields,

Safer within these peaceful dikes, be-  
sieged by the ocean,

Than were our fathers in forts, be-  
sieged by the enemy's cannon.

Fear no evil, my friend, and to-night  
may no shadow of sorrow

Fall on this house and hearth; for this  
is the night of the contract.

Built are the house and the barn. The  
merry lads of the village

 Evangeline

Strongly have built them and well; and,  
breaking the glebe round about  
them,

Filled the barn with hay, and the house  
with food for a twelvemonth.

René Leblanc will be here anon, with  
his papers and inkhorn.

Shall we not then be glad, and rejoice  
in the joy of our children?"

As apart by the window she stood, with  
her hand in her lover's,

Blushing Evangeline heard the words  
that her father had spoken,

And, as they died on his lips the worthy  
notary entered.

## Evangeline \*

### III.

BENT like a labouring oar, that  
toils in the surf of the ocean,  
Bent, but not broken, by age was the  
    form of the notary public;  
Shocks of yellow hair, like the silken  
    floss of the maize, hung  
Over his shoulders; his forehead was  
    high; and glasses with horn bows  
Sat astride on his nose, with a look of  
    wisdom supernal.

Father of twenty children was he, and  
    more than a hundred  
Children's children rode on his knee, and  
    heard his great watch tick.

Four long years in the times of the war  
had he languished a captive,  
Suffering much in an old French fort  
as the friend of the English.  
  
Now, though warier grown, without all  
guile or suspicion,  
Ripe in wisdom was he, but patient, and  
simple, and childlike.  
He was beloved by all, and most of all  
by the children;  
For he told them tales of the Loup-  
garou in the forest,  
And of the goblin that came in the night  
to water the horses,  
And of the white Létiche, the ghost of  
a child who unchristened  
Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen  
the chambers of children;  
And how on Christmas eve the oxen  
talked in the stable,

## Evangeline \*

And how the fever was cured by a spider  
shut up in a nutshell,  
And of the marvellous powers of four-  
leaved clover and horseshoes,  
With whatsoever else was writ in the  
lore of the village.  
Then up rose from his seat by the fire-  
side Basil the blacksmith,  
Knocked from his pipe the ashes, and  
slowly extending his right hand,  
“ Father Leblanc,” he exclaimed, “ thou  
hast heard the talk in the village,  
And, perchance, canst tell us some news  
of these ships and their errand.”  
Then with modest demeanour made  
answer the notary public:  
“ Gossip enough have I heard, in sooth,  
yet am never the wiser ;  
And what their errand may be I know  
not better than others.

Yet am I not of those who imagine some  
evil intention

Brings them here, for we are at peace;  
and why then molest us?"

"God's name!" shouted the hasty and  
somewhat irascible blacksmith;

"Must we in all things look for the  
how, and the why, and the where-  
fore?

Daily injustice is done, and might is the  
right of the strongest!"

But, without heeding his warmth, con-  
tinued the notary public,—

"Man is unjust, but God is just; and  
finally justice

Triumphs; and well I remember a story  
that often consoled me,

When as a captive I lay in the old French  
fort at Port Royal."

## Evangeline \*

This was the old man's favourite tale,  
and he loved to repeat it

Whenever neighbours complained that  
any injustice was done them.

"Once in an ancient city, whose name  
I no longer remember,

Raised aloft on a column, a brazen  
statue of Justice

Stood in the public square, upholding  
the scales in its left hand,

And in its right a sword, as an emblem  
that justice presided

Over the laws of the land and the  
hearts and homes of the people.

Even the birds had built their nests in  
the scales of the balance,

Having no fear of the sword that flashed  
in the sunshine above them.

But in the course of time the laws of  
the land were corrupted;

\* Evangeline

Might took the place of right, and the  
weak were oppressed, and the  
mighty

Ruled with an iron rod. Then it  
chanced in a nobleman's palace

That a necklace of pearls was lost, and  
ere long a suspicion

Fell on an orphan girl who lived as  
maid in the household.

She, after form of trial condemned to  
die on the scaffold,

Patiently met her doom at the foot of  
the statue of Justice.

As to her Father in heaven her innocent  
spirit ascended,

Lo! o'er the city a tempest rose; and the  
bolts of the thunder

Smote the statue of bronze, and hurled  
in wrath from its left hand

## Evangeline \*

Down on the pavement below the clattering scales of the balance,  
And in the hollow thereof was found  
    the nest of a magpie,  
Into whose clay-built walls the necklace of pearls was inwoven."

Silenced, but not convinced, when the  
    story was ended, the blacksmith  
Stood like a man who fain would speak,  
    but findeth no language;  
All his thoughts were congealed into  
    lines on his face, as the vapours  
Freeze in fantastic shapes on the window-panes in the winter.

Then Evangeline lighted the brazen lamp on the table,  
Filled, till it overflowed, the pewter tankard with home-brewed  
Nut-brown ale, that was famed for its

strength in the village of Grand-  
Pré;

While from his pocket the notary drew  
his papers and ink-horn,

Wrote with a steady hand the date and  
the age of the parties,

Naming the dower of the bride in flocks  
of sheep and in cattle.

Orderly all things proceeded, and duly  
and well were completed,

And the great seal of the law was set  
like a sun on the margin.

Then from his leathern pouch the farmer  
threw on the table

Three times the old man's fee in solid  
pieces of silver;

And the notary rising, and blessing the  
bride and the bridegroom,

Lifted aloft the tankard of ale and  
drank to their welfare.

## Evangeline \*

Wiping the foam from his lip, he  
solemnly bowed and departed,  
While in silence the others sat and mused  
    by the fireside,  
Till Evangeline brought the draught-  
    board out of its corner.  
Soon was the game begun. In friendly  
    contention the old men  
Laughed at each lucky hit, or unsuccess-  
    ful manœuvre,  
Laughed when a man was crowned, or a  
    breach was made in the king-row.  
Meanwhile apart, in the twilight gloom  
    of a window's embrasure,  
Sat the lovers, and whispered together,  
    beholding the moon rise      12  
Over the pallid sea and the silvery mist  
    of the meadows.  
Silently one by one, in the infinite  
    meadows of heaven,

\* Evangeline

Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels.

Thus passed the evening away. Anon  
the bell from the belfry  
Rang out the hour of nine, the village  
curfew, and straightway  
Rose the guests and departed; and silence  
reigned in the household.  
Many a farewell word and sweet good-  
night on the door-step  
Lingered long in Evangeline's heart and  
filled it with gladness.  
Carefully then were covered the embers  
that glowed on the hearth-stone,  
And on the oaken stairs resounded the  
tread of the farmer.  
Soon with a soundless step the foot of  
Evangeline followed.

## Evangeline \*

Up the staircase moved a luminous space  
in the darkness,

Lighted less by the lamp than the shin-  
ing face of the maiden.

Silent she passed through the hall, and  
entered the door of her chamber.

Simple that chamber was, with its cur-  
tains of white, and its clothes-press  
Ample and high, on whose spacious  
shelves were carefully folded

Linen and woolen stuffs, by the hand of  
Evangeline woven.

This was the precious dower she would  
bring to her husband in marriage,

Better than flocks and herds, being  
proofs of her skill as a housewife.

Soon she extinguished her lamp, for the  
mellow and radiant moonlight

Streamed through the windows, and

¶ Evangeline

lighted the room, till the heart of  
the maiden  
Swelled and obeyed its power, like the  
tremulous tides of the ocean.  
Ah! she was fair, exceeding fair to be-  
hold, as she stood with  
Naked snow-white feet on the gleaming  
floor of her chamber!  
Little she dreamed that below, among  
the trees of the orchard,  
Waited her lover and watched for the  
gleam of her lamp and her shadow.  
Yet were her thoughts of him, and at  
times a feeling of sadness  
Passed o'er her soul, as the sailing shade  
of clouds in the moonlight  
Flitted across the floor and darkened  
the room for a moment.  
And as she gazed from the window she  
saw serenely the moon pass

## Evangeline \*

Forth from the folds of a cloud, and  
one star follow her footsteps,  
As out of Abraham's tent young Ish-  
mael wandered with Hagar!

IV.

PLEASANTLY rose next morn the sun on the village of Grand-Pré.  
Pleasantly gleamed in the soft, sweet air the Basin of Minas,  
Where the ships, with their wavering shadows, were riding at anchor.  
Life had long been astir in the village, and clamorous labour  
Knocked with its hundred hands at the golden gates of the morning.  
Now from the country around, from the farms and neighbouring hamlets,  
Came in their holiday dresses the blithe Acadian peasants.

## Evangeline \*

Many a glad good-morrow and jocund  
    laugh from the young folk  
Made the bright air brighter, as up from  
    the numerous meadows,  
Where no path could be seen but the  
    track of wheels in the greensward,  
Group after group appeared, and joined,  
    or passed on the highway.  
Long ere noon, in the village all sounds  
    of labour were silenced.  
Thronged were the streets with people;  
    and noisy groups at the house-  
        doors  
Sat in the cheerful sun, and rejoiced and  
    gossiped together.  
Every house was an inn, where all were  
    welcomed and feasted;  
For with this simple people, who lived  
    like brothers together,

\* Evangeline

All things were held in common, and  
what one had was another's.  
Yet under Benedict's roof hospitality  
seemed more abundant:  
For Evangeline stood among the guests  
of her father;  
Bright was her face with smiles, and  
words of welcome and gladness  
Fell from her beautiful lips, and blessed  
the cup as she gave it.

Under the open sky, in the odorous  
air of the orchard,  
Bending with golden fruit, was spread  
the feast of betrothal.  
There in the shade of the porch were  
the priest and the notary seated;  
There good Benedict sat, and sturdy  
Basil the blacksmith.

## Evangeline \*

Not far withdrawn from these, by the  
cider-press and the beehives,  
Michael the fiddler was placed, with the  
gayest of hearts and of waistcoats.  
Shadow and light from the leaves alter-  
nately played on his snow-white  
Hair, as it waved in the wind; and the  
jolly face of the fiddler  
Glowed like a living coal when the  
ashes are blown from the embers.  
Gaily the old man sang to the vibrant  
sound of his fiddle,  
*Tous les Bourgeois de Chartres, and le*  
*Carillon de Dunkerque,*  
And anon with his wooden shoes beat  
time to the music.  
Merrily, merrily whirled the wheels of  
the dizzying dances  
Under the orchard-trees and down the  
path to the meadows;

Old folk and young together, and children mingled among them.

Fairest of all the maids was Evangeline,  
Benedict's daughter!

Noblest of all the youths was Gabriel,  
son of the blacksmith!

So passed the morning away. And lo! with a summons sonorous  
Sounded the bell from its tower, and over the meadows a drum beat.  
Thronged ere long was the church with men. Without, in the churchyard,  
Waited the women. They stood by the graves, and hung on the head-stones  
Garlands of autumn-leaves and evergreens fresh from the forest.  
Then came the guard from the ships, and marching proudly among them

## Evangeline \*

Entered the sacred portal. With loud  
and dissonant clangour  
Echoed the sound of their brazen drums  
from ceiling and casement,—  
Echoed a moment only, and slowly the  
ponderous portal  
Closed, and in silence the crowd awaited  
the will of the soldiers.  
Then uprose their commander, and spake  
from the steps of the altar,  
Holding aloft in his hands, with its seals,  
the royal commission.  
“ You are convened this day,” he said,  
“ by his Majesty’s orders.  
Clement and kind has he been; but how  
you have answered his kindness,  
Let your own hearts reply! To my  
natural make and my temper  
Painful the task is I do, which to you  
I know must be grievous.

\* Evangeline

Yet must I bow and obey, and deliver  
the will of our monarch;  
Namely, that all your lands, and dwell-  
ings, and cattle of all kinds,  
Forfeited be to the crown; and that  
you yourselves from this province  
Be transported to other lands. God  
grant you may dwell there  
Ever as faithful subjects, a happy and  
peaceable people!  
Prisoners now I declare you; for such  
is his Majesty's pleasure!"  
As, when the air is serene in the sultry  
solstice of summer,  
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly  
sling of the hailstones  
Beats down the farmer's corn in the field  
and shatters his windows,  
Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground  
with thatch from the house-roofs,

## Evangeline \*

Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to  
break their inclosures;

So on the hearts of the people descended  
the words of the speaker.

Silent a moment they stood in speech-  
less wonder, and then rose

Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow  
and anger,

And, by one impulse moved, they madly  
rushed to the door-way.

Vain was the hope of escape; and cries  
and fierce imprecations

Rang through the house of prayer; and  
high o'er the heads of the others

Rose, with his arms uplifted, the figure  
of Basil the blacksmith,

As, on a stormy sea, a spar is tossed by  
the billows.

Flushed was his face and distorted with  
passion; and wildly he shouted,—

"Down with the tyrants of England!  
we never have sworn them allegiance!

Death to these foreign soldiers, who  
seize on our homes and our har-  
vests!"

More he fain would have said, but the  
merciless hand of a soldier  
Smote him upon the mouth, and dragged  
him down to the pavement.

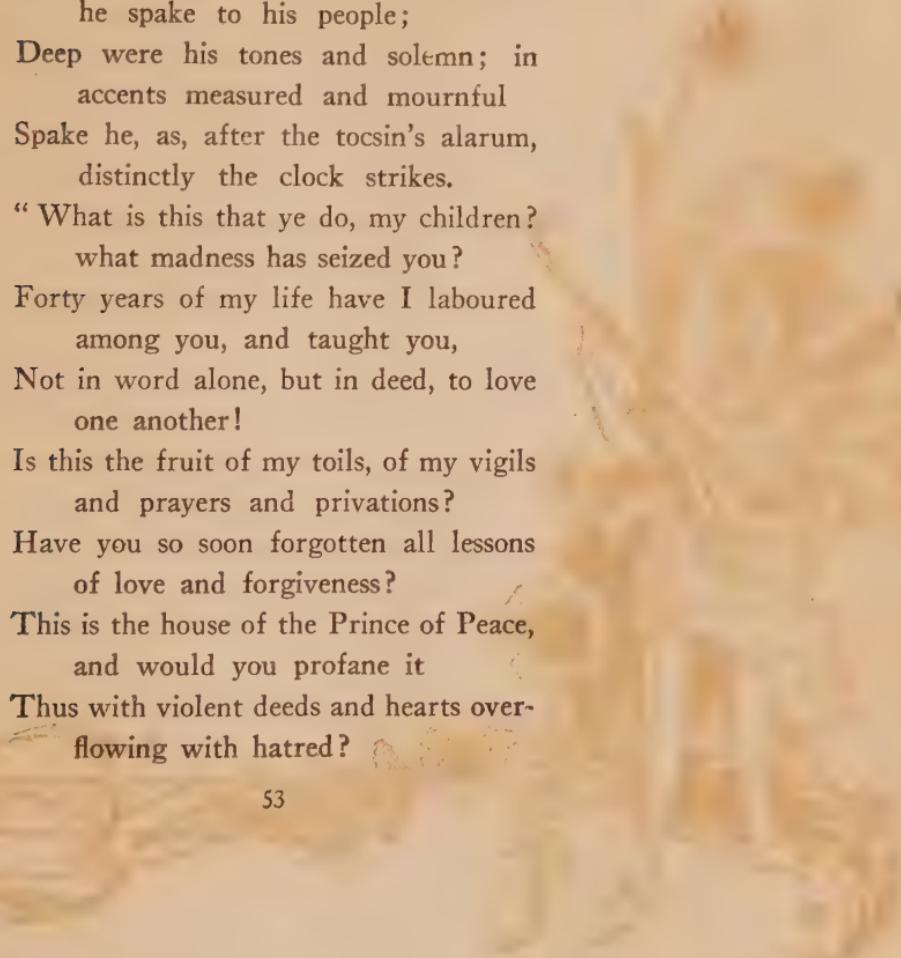
In the midst of the strife and tumult  
of angry contention,

**Lo!** the door of the chancel opened, and  
Father Felician

Entered, with serious mien, and ascended  
the steps of the altar.

Raising his reverend hand, with a ges-  
ture he awed into silence

## Evangeline \*

All that clamorous throng; and thus  
he spake to his people;  
Deep were his tones and solemn; in  
accents measured and mournful  
Spake he, as, after the tocsin's alarm,  
distinctly the clock strikes.  
“What is this that ye do, my children?  
what madness has seized you?  
Forty years of my life have I laboured  
among you, and taught you,  
Not in word alone, but in deed, to love  
one another!  
Is this the fruit of my toils, of my vigils  
and prayers and privations?  
Have you so soon forgotten all lessons  
of love and forgiveness?  
This is the house of the Prince of Peace,  
and would you profane it  
Thus with violent deeds and hearts over-  
flowing with hatred? 

※ Evangeline

Lo! where the crucified Christ from  
His cross is gazing upon you!  
See! in those sorrowful eyes what meek-  
ness and holy compassion!  
Hark! how those lips still repeat the  
prayer, ‘O Father, forgive them!’  
Let us repeat that prayer in the hour  
when the wicked assail us,  
Let us repeat it now, and say, ‘O Fa-  
ther, forgive them!’”  
Few were his words of rebuke, but deep  
in the hearts of his people  
Sank they, and sobs of contrition suc-  
ceeded that passionate outbreak,  
While they repeated his prayer, and said,  
“O Father, forgive them!”

Then came the evening service. The  
tapers gleamed from the altar.

## Evangeline \*

Fervent and deep was the voice of the priest, and the people responded, Not with their lips alone, but their hearts; and the Ave Maria Sang they, and fell on their knees, and their souls, with devotion translated, Rose on the ardour of prayer, like Elijah ascending to heaven.

Meanwhile had spread in the village the tidings of ill, and on all sides Wandered, wailing, from house to house the women and children. Long at her father's door Evangeline stood, with her right hand shielding her eyes from the level rays of the sun, that, descending, Lighted the village street with mysterious splendour, and roofed each

•  Evangeline

Peasant's cottage with golden thatch,  
and emblazoned its windows.  
Long within had been spread the snow-  
white cloth on the table;  
There stood the wheaten loaf, and the  
honey fragrant with wild flowers;  
There stood the tankard of ale, and the  
cheese fresh brought from the dairy;  
And at the head of the board the great  
arm-chair of the farmer.  
Thus did Evangeline wait at her father's  
door, as the sunset  
Threw the long shadows of trees o'er the  
broad ambrosial meadows.  
Ah! on her spirit within a deeper shadow  
had fallen,  
And from the fields of her soul a fra-  
grance celestial ascended,—  
Charity, meekness, love, and hope, and  
forgiveness, and patience!

## Evangeline \*

Then, all-forgetful of self, she wandered  
into the village,  
Cheering with looks and words the dis-  
consolate hearts of the women,  
As o'er the darkening fields with linger-  
ing steps they departed,  
Urged by their household cares, and the  
weary feet of their children.  
Down sank the great red sun, and in  
golden, glimmering vapours  
Veiled the light of his face, like a  
Prophet descending from Sinai.  
Sweetly over the village the bell of the  
Angelus sounded.

Meanwhile, amid the gloom, by the  
church Evangeline lingered.  
All was silent within; and in vain at the  
door and the windows

Stood she, and listened and looked, till,  
overcome by emotion,  
“ Gabriel ! ” cried she, aloud with tremu-  
lous voice; but no answer  
Came from the graves of the dead, nor  
the gloomier grave of the living.  
Slowly at length she returned to the  
tenantless house of her father.  
Smouldered the fire on the hearth, on  
the board was the supper untasted,  
Empty and drear was each room, and  
haunted with phantoms of terror.  
Sadly echoed her step on the stair and  
the floor of her chamber.  
In the dead of the night she heard the  
whispering rain fall  
Loud on the withered leaves of the syc-  
amore-tree by the window.  
Keenly the lightning flashed; and the  
voice of the neighbouring thunder

## Evangeline \*

Told her that God was in heaven, and  
governed the world he created!  
Then she remembered the tale she had  
heard of the justice of heaven;  
Soothed was her troubled soul, and she  
peacefully slumbered till morning.

## V.

FOUR times the sun had risen and set; and now on the fifth day Cheerily called the cock to the sleeping maids of the farm-house. Soon o'er the yellow fields, in silent and mournful procession, Came from the neighbouring hamlets and farms the Acadian women, Driving in ponderous wains their household goods to the sea-shore, Pausing and looking back to gaze once more on their dwellings, Ere they were shut from sight by the winding road and the woodland.

## Evangeline \*

Close at their sides their children ran,  
and urged on the oxen,  
While in their little hands they clasped  
some fragments of playthings.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth they  
hurried; and there on the sea-beach  
Piled in confusion lay the household  
goods of the peasants.

All day long between the shore and the  
ships did the boats ply;

All day long the wains came labouring  
down from the village.

Late in the afternoon, when the sun was  
near to his setting,

Echoing far o'er the fields came the roll  
of drums from the church-yard.

Thither the women and children  
thronged. On a sudden the church-  
doors

\* Evangeline

Opened, and forth came the guard, and  
marching in gloomy procession  
Followed the long-imprisoned, but pa-  
tient, Acadian farmers.

Even as pilgrims, who journey afar from  
their homes and their country,  
Sing as they go, and in singing forget  
they are weary and way-worn,  
So with songs on their lips the Acadian  
peasants descended

Down from the church to the shore, amid  
their wives and their daughters.

Foremost the young men came; and,   
raising together their voices,  
Sang with tremulous lips a chant of the  
Catholic Missions: —

“ Sacred heart of the Saviour! O inex-  
haustible fountain!

Fill our hearts this day with strength  
and submission and patience!”

## Evangeline \*

Then the old men, as they marched, and  
the women that stood by the way-side

Joined in the sacred psalm, and the birds  
in the sunshine above them

Mingled their notes therewith, like  
voices of spirits departed.

Half-way down to the shore Evangeline waited in silence,

Not overcome with grief, but strong in  
the hour of affliction,—

Calmly and sadly she waited, until the  
procession approached her,

And she beheld the face of Gabriel pale  
with emotion.

Tears then filled her eyes, and, eagerly  
running to meet him,

Clasped she his hands, and laid her head  
on his shoulder, and whispered,—

\* Evangeline

"Gabriel! be of good cheer! for if we  
love one another,

Nothing, in truth, can harm us, whatever  
mischances may happen!"

Smiling she spake these words; then  
suddenly paused, for her father  
Saw she slowly advancing. Alas! how  
changed was his aspect!

Gone was the glow from his cheek, and  
the fire from his eye, and his foot-  
step

Heavier seemed with the weight of the  
weary heart in his bosom.

But with a smile and a sigh, she clasped  
his neck and embraced him,

Speaking words of endearment where  
words of comfort availed not.

Thus to the Gaspereau's mouth moved  
on that mournful procession.

## Evangeline \*

There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of embarking.

Busily plied the freighted boats; and in the confusion

Wives were torn from their husbands,  
and mothers, too late, saw their children

Left on the land, extending their arms,  
with wildest entreaties.

So unto separate ships were Basil and Gabriel carried,

While in despair on the shore Evangeline stood with her father.

Half the task was not done when the sun went down, and the twilight

Deepened and darkened around; and in haste the refluent ocean

Fled away from the shore, and left the line of the sand-beach

Covered with waifs of the tide, with  
kelp and the slippery sea-weed.  
Farther back in the midst of the house-  
hold goods and the wagons,  
Like to a gypsy camp, or a leaguer after  
a battle,  
All escape cut off by the sea, and the  
sentinels near them,  
Lay encamped for the night the houseless  
Acadian farmers.  
Back to its nethermost caves retreated  
the bellowing ocean,  
Dragging adown the beach the rattling  
pebbles, and leaving  
Inland and far up the shore the stranded  
boats of the sailors.  
Then, as the night descended, the herds  
returned from their pastures;  
Sweet was the moist still air with the  
odour of milk from their udders;

## Evangeline \*

Lowing they waited, and long, at the  
well-known bars of the farm-  
yard,—

Waited and looked in vain for the voice  
and the hand of the milkmaid,  
Silence reigned in the street, from the  
church no Angelus sounded,  
Rose no smoke from the roofs, and  
gleamed no lights from the win-  
dows.

But on the shores meanwhile the even-  
ing fires had been kindled,  
Built of the drift-wood thrown on the  
sands from wrecks in the tempest.  
Round them shapes of gloom and sorrow-  
ful faces were gathered,  
Voices of women were heard, and of  
men, and the crying of children.

Onward from fire to fire, as from hearth  
to hearth in his parish,  
Wandered the faithful priest, consoling  
and blessing and cheering,  
Like unto shipwrecked Paul on Melita's  
desolate sea-shore.

Thus he approached the place where  
Evangeline sat with her father,  
And in the flickering light beheld the  
face of the old man,  
Haggard and hollow and wan, and without  
either thought or emotion,  
E'en as the face of a clock from which  
the hands have been taken.  
Vainly Evangeline strove with words  
and caresses to cheer him,  
Vainly offered him food; yet he moved  
not, he looked not, he spake not,  
But, with a vacant stare, ever gazed at  
the flickering fire-light.

## Evangeline \*

"*Benedicite!*" murmured the priest, in  
tones of compassion.

More he fain would have said, but his  
heart was full, and his accents

Faltering and paused on his lips, as the  
feet of a child on a threshold,

Hushed by the scene he beholds, and  
the awful presence of sorrow.

Silently, therefore, he laid his hand on  
the head of the maiden,

Raising his eyes, full of tears, to the  
silent stars that above them

Moved on their way, unperturbed by  
the wrongs and sorrows of mortals.

Then sat he down at her side, and they  
wept together in silence.

Suddenly rose from the south a light,  
*As in autumn the blood-red*

 Evangeline

Moon climbs the crystal walls of heaven,  
and o'er the horizon  
Titan-like stretches its hundred hands  
upon mountain and meadow,  
Seizing the rocks and the rivers, and  
piling huge shadows together.  
Broader and ever broader it gleamed on  
the roofs of the village,  
Gleamed on the sky and the sea, and  
the ships that lay in the roadstead.  
Columns of shining smoke uprose, and  
flashes of flame were  
Thrust through their folds and withdrawn  
like the quivering hands of  
a martyr.  
Then as the winds seized the gleeds and  
the burning thatch, and, uplifting,  
Whirled them aloft through the air, at  
once from a hundred house-tops

## Evangeline \*

Started the sheeted smoke with flashes  
of flame intermingled.

These things beheld in dismay the  
crowd on the shore and on ship-  
board.

Speechless at first they stood, then cried  
aloud in their anguish,

"We shall behold no more our homes  
in the village of Grand-Pré!"

Loud on a sudden the cocks began to  
crow in the farm-yards,

Thinking the day had dawned; and anon  
the lowing of cattle

Came on the evening breeze, by the  
barking of dogs interrupted.

Then rose a sound of dread, such as  
startles the sleeping encampments

Far in the western prairies or forests  
that skirt the Nebraska,

When the wild horses affrighted sweep  
by with the speed of a whirlwind,  
Or the loud bellowing herds of buffaloes  
rush to the river.

Such was the sound that arose on the  
night, as the herds and the horses  
Broke through their folds and fences,  
and madly rushed o'er the meadows.

Overwhelmed with the sight, yet  
speechless, the priest and the maiden  
Gazed on the scene of terror that red-  
dened and widened before them;  
And as they turned at length to speak  
to their silent companion,  
Lo! from his seat he had fallen, and  
stretched abroad on the sea-shore  
Motionless lay his form, from which  
the soul had departed.

## Evangeline \*

Slowly the priest uplifted the lifeless  
head, and the maiden

Knelt at her father's side, and wailed  
aloud in her terror.

Then in a swoon she sank, and lay with  
her head on his bosom.

Through the long night she lay in deep,  
oblivious slumber;

And when she awoke from the trance,  
she beheld a multitude near her.

Faces of friends she beheld, that were  
mournfully gazing upon her,

Pallid, with tearful eyes, and looks of  
saddest compassion.

Still the blaze of the burning village  
illumined the landscape,

Reddened the sky overhead, and gleamed  
on the faces around her,

And like the day of doom it seemed to  
her wavering senses.

\* Evangeline

Then a familiar voice she heard, as it  
said to the people:  
“ Let us bury him here by the sea. When  
a happier season  
Brings us again to our homes from the  
unknown land of our exile,  
Then shall his sacred dust be piously  
laid in the church-yard.”  
Such were the words of the priest. And  
there in haste by the sea-side,  
Having the glare of the burning village  
for funeral torches,  
But without bell or book, they buried  
the farmer of Grand-Pré.  
And as the voice of the priest repeated  
the service of sorrow,  
Lo! with a mournful sound, like the  
voice of a vast congregation,  
Solemnly answered the sea, and mingled  
its roar with the dirges.

## Evangeline \*

'Twas the returning tide, that afar from  
the waste of the ocean,  
With the first dawn of the day, came  
heaving and hurrying landward.  
Then recommenced once more the stir  
and noise of embarking;  
And with the ebb of the tide the ships  
sailed out of the harbour,  
Leaving behind them the dead on the  
shore, and the village in ruins.

PART THE SECOND

I.

MANY a weary year had passed  
since the burning of Grand-Pré,  
When on the falling tide the freighted  
vessels departed,  
Bearing a nation, with all its household  
gods, into exile,  
Exile without an end, and without an  
example in story.  
Far asunder, on separate coasts, the  
Acadians landed;  
Scattered were they, like flakes of snow,  
when the wind from the northeast

## Evangeline \*

Strikes aslant through the fogs that  
darken the Banks of Newfound-  
land.

Friendless, homeless, hopeless, they wan-  
dered from city to city,

From the cold lakes of the North to  
sultry Southern savannas,—

From the bleak shores of the sea to the  
lands where the Father of Waters  
Seizes the hills in his hands, and drags  
them down to the ocean,

Deep in their sands to bury the scattered  
bones of the mammoth.

Friends they sought and homes; and  
many, despairing, heart-broken,

Asked of the earth but a grave, and no  
longer a friend nor a fireside.

Written their history stands on tablets of  
stone in the church-yards.

\* Evangeline

Long among them was seen a maiden  
    who waited and wandered,  
Lowly and meek in spirit, and patiently  
    suffering all things.

Fair was she and young; but, alas! be-  
    fore her extended,  
Dreary and vast and silent, the desert  
    of life, with its pathway  
Marked by the graves of those who had  
    sorrowed and suffered before her,  
Passions long extinguished, and hopes  
    long dead and abandoned,  
As the emigrant's way o'er the Western  
    desert is marked by  
Camp-fires long consumed, and bones  
    that bleach in the sunshine.  
Something there was in her life incom-  
    plete, imperfect, unfinished;  
As if a morning of June, with all its  
    music and sunshine,

## Evangeline \*

Suddenly paused in the sky, and, fading,  
slowly descended

Into the east again, from whence it late  
had arisen.

Sometimes she lingered in towns, till,  
urged by the fever within her,

Urged by a restless longing, the hunger  
and thirst of the spirit,

She would commence again her endless  
search and endeavour;

Sometimes in church-yards strayed, and  
gazed on the crosses and tomb-  
stones,

Sat by some nameless grave, and thought  
that perhaps in its bosom

He was already at rest, and she longed  
to slumber beside him.

Sometimes a rumour, a hearsay, an in-  
articulate whisper,

Came with its airy hand to point and  
beckon her forward.

Sometimes she spake with those who had  
seen her beloved and known him,  
But it was long ago, in some far-off  
place or forgotten.

“Gabriel Lajeunesse!” they said; “O  
yes! we have seen him.

He was with Basil the blacksmith, and  
both have gone to the prairies;

*Coureurs-des-Bois* are they, and famous  
hunters and trappers.”

“Gabriel Lajeunesse!” said others;  
“O yes! we have seen him.

He is a *Voyageur* in the lowlands of  
Louisiana.”

Then would they say,—“Dear child!  
why dream and wait for him  
longer?

## Evangeline \*

Are there not other youths as fair as  
Gabriel? others

Who have hearts as tender and true, and  
spirits as loyal?

Here is Baptiste Leblanc, the notary's  
son, who has loved thee

Many a tedious year; come, give him  
thy hand and be happy!

Thou art too fair to be left to braid St.  
Catherine's tresses."

Then would Evangeline answer, serenely  
but sadly, — "I cannot!

Whither my heart has gone, there fol-  
lows my hand, and not elsewhere.

For when the heart goes before, like a  
lamp, and illumines the pathway,

Many things are made clear, that else  
lie hidden in darkness."

And thereupon the priest, her friend and  
father-confessor,

Said, with a smile,—“O daughter!  
thy God thus speaketh within thee!  
Talk not of wasted affection, affection  
never was wasted;  
If it enrich not the heart of another, its  
waters, returning  
Back to their springs, like the rain, shall  
fill them full of refreshment;  
That which the fountain sends forth  
returns again to the fountain.  
Patience; accomplish thy labour; accom-  
plish thy work of affection!  
Sorrow and silence are strong, and pa-  
tient endurance is godlike.  
Therefore accomplish thy labour of love,  
till the heart is made godlike,  
Purified, strengthened, perfected, and  
rendered more worthy of heaven!”  
Cheered by the good man’s words,  
Evangeline laboured and waited.

## Evangeline \*

Still in her heart she heard the funeral  
dirge of the ocean,

But with its sound there was mingled  
a voice that whispered, "Despair  
not!"

Thus did that poor soul wander in want  
and cheerless discomfort,

Bleeding, barefooted, over the shards and  
thorns of existence.

Let me essay, O Muse! to follow the  
wanderer's footsteps;—

Not through each devious path, each  
changeful year of existence;

But as a traveller follows a streamlet's  
course through the valley;

Far from its margin at times, and see-  
ing the gleam of its water

Here and there, in some open space, and  
at intervals only;

※ Evangeline

Then drawing nearer its banks, through  
    sylvan glooms that conceal it,  
Though he behold it not, he can hear  
    its continuous murmur;  
Happy, at length, if he find the spot  
    where it reaches an outlet.

## Evangeline \*

### II.

IT was the month of May. Far down  
the Beautiful River,  
Past the Ohio shore and past the mouth  
of the Wabash,  
Into the golden stream of the broad and  
swift Mississippi,  
Floated a cumbrous boat, that was  
rowed by Acadian boatmen.  
It was a band of exiles; a raft, as it  
were, from the shipwrecked  
Nation, scattered along the coast, now  
floating together,  
Bound by the bonds of a common belief  
and a common misfortune;

\* Evangeline

Men and women and children, who,  
guided by hope or by hearsay,  
Sought for their kith and their kin  
among the few-acre farmers  
On the Acadian coast, and the prairies of  
fair Opelousas.

With them Evangeline went, and her  
guide, the Father Felician.

Onward o'er sunken sands, through a  
wilderness sombre with forests,  
Day after day they glided adown the  
turbulent river;

Night after night, by their blazing fires,  
encamped on its borders.

Now through rushing chutes, among  
green islands, where plumelike  
Cotton-trees nodded their shadowy crests,  
they swept with the current,  
Then emerged into broad lagoons, where  
silvery sand-bars

## Evangeline \*

Lay in the stream, and along the wim-  
pling waves of their margin,  
Shining with snow-white plumes, large  
flocks of pelicans waded.

Level the landscape grew, and along the  
shores of the river,

Shaded by china-trees in the midst of  
luxuriant gardens,

Stood the houses of planters, with negro-  
cabins and dove-cots.

They were approaching the region where  
reigns perpetual summer,

Where through the Golden Coast, and  
groves of orange and citron

Sweeps with majestic curve the river  
away to the eastward.

They, too, swerved from their course;  
and, entering the Bayou of Plaque-  
mine,

Soon were lost in a maze of sluggish  
and devious waters,  
Which, like a network of steel, extended  
in every direction.  
Over their heads the towering and tene-  
brous boughs of the cypress  
Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses  
in midair  
Waved like banners that hang on the  
walls of ancient cathedrals.  
Deathlike the silence seemed, and un-  
broken, save by the herons  
Home to their roosts in the cedar-trees  
returning at sunset,  
Or by the owl, as he greeted the moon  
with demoniac laughter.  
Lovely the moonlight was as it glanced  
and gleamed on the water,  
Gleamed on the columns of cypress and  
cedar sustaining the arches,

## Evangeline \*

Down through whose broken vaults it  
    fell as through chinks in a ruin.  
Dreamlike, and indistinct, and strange  
    were all things around them;  
And o'er their spirits there came a feel-  
    ing of wonder and sadness,—  
Strange forebodings of ill, unseen that  
    cannot be compassed.  
As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the  
    turf of the prairies,  
Far in advance are closed the leaves of  
    the shrinking mimosa,  
So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad  
    forebodings of evil,  
Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the  
    stroke of doom has attained it.  
But Evangeline's heart was sustained by  
    a vision, that faintly  
Floated before her eyes, and beckoned  
    her on through the moonlight.

It was the thought of her brain that  
assumed the shape of a phantom.  
Through those shadowy isles had Ga-  
briel wandered before her,  
And every stroke of the oar now  
brought him nearer and nearer.

Then in his place, at the prow of the  
boat, rose one of the oarsmen,  
And, as a signal sound, if others like  
them peradventure  
Sailed on those gloomy and midnight  
streams, blew a blast on his bugle.  
Wild through the dark colonnades and  
corridors leafy the blast rang,  
Breaking the seal of silence, and giving  
tongues to the forest.  
Soundless above them the banners of  
moss just stirred to the music.

## Evangeline \*

Multitudinous echoes awoke and died  
    in the distance,  
Over the watery floor, and beneath the  
    reverberant branches;  
But not a voice replied; no answer came  
    from the darkness;  
And when the echoes had ceased, like a  
    sense of pain was the silence.  
Then Evangeline slept; but the boatmen  
    rowed through the midnight,  
Silent at times, then singing familiar  
    Canadian boat-songs,  
Such as they sang of old on their own  
    Acadian rivers.  
And through the night were heard the  
    mysterious sounds of the desert,  
Far off, indistinct, as of wave or wind in  
    the forest,  
Mixed with the whoop of the crane and  
    the roar of the grim alligator.

Thus ere another noon they emerged  
from the shades; and before them  
Lay, in the golden sun, the lakes of the  
Atchafalaya.

Water-lilies in myriads rocked on the  
slight undulations  
Made by the passing oars, and, resplend-  
ent in beauty, the lotus  
Lifted her golden crown above the heads  
of the boatmen.

Faint was the air with the odorous breath  
of magnolia blossoms,  
And with the heat of noon; and num-  
berless sylvan islands,  
Fragrant and thickly embowered with  
blossoming hedges of roses,  
Near to whose shores they glided along,  
invited to slumber.  
Soon by the fairest of these their weary  
oars were suspended.

## Evangeline \*

Under the boughs of Wachita willows,  
    that grew by the margin,  
Safely their boat was moored; and scat-  
    tered about on the greensward,  
Tired with their midnight toil, the  
    weary travellers slumbered.  
Over them vast and high extended the  
    cope of a cedar.  
Swinging from its great arms, the trum-  
    pet-flower and the grape-vine  
Hung their ladder of ropes aloft like  
    the ladder of Jacob,  
On whose pendulous stairs the angels  
    ascending, descending,  
Were the swift humming-birds, that  
    flitted from blossom to blossom.  
Such was the vision Evangeline saw as  
    she slumbered beneath it.  
Filled was her heart with love, and the  
    dawn of an opening heaven

Lighted her soul in sleep with the glory  
of regions celestial.

Nearer and ever nearer, among the  
numberless islands,  
Darted a light, swift boat, that sped away  
o'er the water,  
Urged on its course by the sinewy arms  
of hunters and trappers.  
Northward its prow was turned, to the  
land of the bison and beaver.  
At the helm sat a youth, with counte-  
nance thoughtful and careworn.  
Dark and neglected locks overshadowed  
his brow, and a sadness  
Somewhat beyond his years on his face  
was legibly written.  
Gabriel was it, who, weary with wait-  
ing, unhappy and restless,

## Evangeline \*

Sought in the Western wilds oblivion of  
self and of sorrow.

Swiftly they glided along, close under  
the lee of the island,

But by the opposite bank, and behind a  
screen of palmettos,

So that they saw not the boat, where it  
lay concealed in the willows,

All undisturbed by the dash of their oars,  
and unseen, were the sleepers,

Angel of God was there none to awaken  
the slumbering maiden.

Swiftly they glided away, like the shade  
of a cloud on a prairie.

After the sound of their oars on the  
tholes had died in the distance,

As from a magic trance the sleepers  
awoke, and the maiden

Said with a sigh to the friendly priest,—

“O Father Felician!

Something says in my heart that near me  
Gabriel wanders.  
Is it a foolish dream, an idle and vague  
superstition?  
Or has an angel passed, and revealed the  
truth to my spirit?"  
Then with a blush, she added, — "Alas  
for my credulous fancy!  
Unto ears like thine such words as these  
have no meaning."  
But made answer the reverend man, and  
he smiled as he answered, —  
" Daughter, thy words are not idle; nor  
are they to me without meaning.  
Feeling is deep and still; and the word  
that floats on the surface  
Is as the tossing buoy, that betrays where  
the anchor is hidden.  
Therefore trust to thy heart, and to  
what the world calls illusions.

## Evangeline \*

Gabriel truly is near thee; for not far  
away to the southward,  
On the banks of the Têche, are the  
towns of St. Maur and St. Martin.  
There the long-wandering bride shall be  
given again to her bridegroom,  
There the long-absent pastor regain his  
flock and his sheepfold.  
Beautiful is the land, with its prairies  
and forests of fruit-trees;  
Under the feet a garden of flowers, and  
the bluest of heavens  
Bending above, and resting its dome on  
the walls of the forest.  
They who dwell there have named it  
the Eden of Louisiana."

And with these words of cheer they  
arose and continued their journey.

Softly the evening came. The sun from  
the western horizon  
Like a magician extended his golden  
wand o'er the landscape;  
Twinkling vapours arose; and sky and  
water and forest  
Seemed all on fire at the touch, and  
melted and mingled together.  
Hanging between two skies, a cloud with  
edges of silver,  
Floated the boat, with its dripping oars,  
on the motionless water.  
Filled was Evangeline's heart with inex-  
pressible sweetness.  
Touched by the magic spell, the sacred  
fountains of feeling  
Glowed with the light of love, as the  
skies and waters around her.  
Then from a neighbouring thicket the  
mocking-bird, wildest of singers,

## Evangeline \*

Swinging aloft on a willow spray that  
hung o'er the water,  
Shook from his little throat such floods  
of delirious music,  
That the whole air and the woods and  
the waves seemed silent to listen.  
Plaintive at first were the tones and sad ;  
then soaring to madness  
Seemed they to follow or guide the revel  
of frenzied Bacchantes.  
Then single notes were heard, in sor-  
rowful, low lamentation ;  
Till, having gathered them all, he flung  
them abroad in derision,  
As when, after a storm, a gust of wind  
through the tree-tops  
Shakes down the rattling rain in a crys-  
tal shower on the branches.  
With such a prelude as this, and hearts  
that throbbed with emotion,

\* Evangeline

Slowly they entered the Têche, where it  
flows through the green Opelousas,  
And through the amber air, above the  
crest of woodland,  
Saw the column of smoke that arose from  
a neighbouring dwelling;—  
Sounds of a horn they heard, and the dis-  
tant lowing of cattle.

III.

NEAR to the bank of the river, o'er-  
shadowed by oaks, from whose  
branches  
Garlands of Spanish moss and of mystic  
mistletoe flaunted,  
Such as the Druids cut down with golden  
hatchets at Yule-tide,  
Stood, secluded and still, the house of  
the herdsman. A garden  
Girded it round about with a belt of  
luxuriant blossoms,  
Filling the air with fragrance. The  
house itself was of timbers  
Hewn from the cypress-tree, and care-  
fully fitted together.

Large and low was the roof; and on  
slender columns supported,  
Rose-wreathed, vine-encircled, a broad  
and spacious veranda,  
Haunt of the humming-bird and the bee,  
extended around it.  
At each end of the house, amid the flow-  
ers of the garden,  
Stationed the dove-cots were, as love's  
perpetual symbol,  
Scenes of endless wooing, and endless  
contentions of rivals.  
Silence reigned o'er the place. The line  
of shadow and sunshine  
Ran near the tops of the trees; but the  
house itself was in shadow,  
And from its chimney-top, ascending  
and slowly expanding  
Into the evening air, a thin blue column  
of smoke rose.

## Evangeline \*

In the rear of the house, from the garden gate, ran a pathway  
Through the great groves of oak to the skirts of the limitless prairie,  
Into whose sea of flowers the sun was slowly descending.  
Full in his track of light, like ships with shadowy canvas  
Hanging loose from their spars in a motionless calm in the tropics,  
Stood a cluster of trees, with tangled cordage of grape-vines.

Just where the woodlands met the flowery surf of the prairie,  
Mounted upon his horse, with Spanish saddle and stirrups,  
Sat a herdsman, arrayed in gaiters and doublet of deerskin.

Broad and brown was the face that from  
under the Spanish sombrero  
Gazed on the peaceful scene, with the  
lordly look of its master.  
Round about him were numberless herds  
of kine, that were grazing  
Quietly in the meadows, and breathing  
the vapoury freshness  
That uprose from the river, and spread  
itself over the landscape.  
Slowly lifting the horn that hung at  
his side, and expanding  
Fully his broad, deep chest, he blew  
a blast, that resounded  
Wildly and sweet and far, through the  
still damp air of the evening.  
Suddenly out of the grass the long white  
horns of the cattle  
Rose like flakes of foam on the adverse  
currents of ocean.

## Evangeline \*

Silent a moment they gazed, then bel-  
lowing rushed o'er the prairie,  
And the whole mass became a cloud, a  
shade in the distance.

Then, as the herdsman turned to the  
house, through the gate of the gar-  
den

Saw he the forms of the priest and the  
maiden advancing to meet him.

Suddenly down from his horse he sprang  
in amazement, and forward  
Rushed with extended arms and exclama-  
tions of wonder;

When they beheld his face, they recog-  
nized Basil, the blacksmith.

Hearty his welcome was, as he led his  
guests to the garden.

There in an arbour of roses with endless  
question and answer

Gave they vent to their hearts, and renewed their friendly embraces,  
Laughing and weeping by turns, or sitting silent and thoughtful.  
Thoughtful, for Gabriel came not; and now dark doubts and misgivings  
Stole o'er the maiden's heart; and Basil, somewhat embarrassed,  
Broke the silence and said,—“ If you came by the Atchafalaya,  
How have you nowhere encountered my Gabriel's boat on the bayous?”  
Over Evangeline's face at the words of Basil a shade passed.  
Tears came into her eyes, and she said, with a tremulous accent:  
“ Gone? is Gabriel gone?” and, concealing her face on his shoulder,  
All her o'erburdened heart gave way, and she wept and lamented.

## Evangeline \*

Then the good Basil said,—and his  
voice grew blithe as he said it,—

"Be of good cheer, my child; it is only  
to-day he departed.

Foolish boy! he has left me alone with  
my herds and my horses.

Moody and restless grown, and tried and  
troubled, his spirit

Could no longer endure the calm of this  
quiet existence.

Thinking ever of thee, uncertain and  
sorrowful ever,

Ever silent, or speaking only of thee and  
his troubles,

He at length had become so tedious to  
men and to maidens,

Tedious even to me, that at length I be-  
thought me, and sent him

Unto the town of Adayes to trade for  
mules with the Spaniards.

Thence he will follow the Indian trails  
to the Ozark Mountains,  
Hunting for furs in the forest, on rivers  
trapping the beaver.

Therefore be of good cheer; we will  
follow the fugitive lover;  
He is not far on his way, and the Fates  
and the streams are against him.  
Up and away to-morrow, and through  
the red dew of the morning  
We will follow him fast, and bring him  
back to his prison."

Then glad voices were heard, and up  
from the banks of the river,  
Borne aloft on his comrades' arms, came  
Michael the fiddler.

Long under Basil's roof had he lived like  
a god on Olympus,

## Evangeline \*

Having no other care than dispensing  
music to mortals.

Far renowned was he for his silver locks  
and his fiddle.

"Long live Michael," they cried, "our  
brave Acadian minstrel!"

As they bore him aloft in triumphal pro-  
cession; and straightway

Father Felician advanced with Evangel-  
ine, greeting the old man

Kindly and oft, and recalling the past,  
while Basil, enraptured,

Hailed with hilarious joy his old com-  
panions and gossips,

Laughing loud and long, and embracing  
mothers and daughters.

Much they marvelled to see the wealth  
of the ci-devant blacksmith,

All his domains and his herds, and his  
patriarchal demeanour;

Much they marvelled to hear his tales  
    of the soil and the climate,  
And of the prairies, whose numberless  
    herds were his who would take  
    them;

Each one thought in his heart that he,  
    too, would go and do likewise.

Thus they ascended the steps, and, crossing  
    the breezy veranda,

Entered the hall of the house, where al-  
    ready the supper of Basil

Waited his late return; and they rested  
    and feasted together.

Over the joyous feast the sudden dark-  
    ness descended.

All was silent without, and, illumining  
    the landscape with silver,

Fair rose the dewy moon and the myriad  
    stars; but within doors,

## Evangeline \*

Brighter than these, shone the faces of  
friends in the glimmering lamplight.  
Then from his station aloft, at the head  
of the table, the herdsman  
Poured forth his heart and his wine to-  
gether in endless profusion.  
Lighting his pipe, that was filled with  
sweet Natchitoches tobacco,  
Thus he spake to his guests, who listened,  
and smiled as they listened:—  
“ Welcome once more, my friends, who  
long have been friendless and home-  
less,  
Welcome once more to a home, that is  
better perchance than the old one!  
Here no hungry winter congeals our  
blood like the rivers;  
Here no stony ground provokes the  
wrath of the farmer.

Smoothly the ploughshare runs through  
the soil, as a keel through the water.  
**A**ll the year round the orange-groves are  
in blossom; and grass grows  
More in a single night than a whole  
Canadian summer.  
Here, too, numberless herds run wild  
and unclaimed in the prairies;  
Here, too, lands may be had for the asking,  
and forests of timber  
With a few blows of the axe are hewn  
and framed into houses.  
After your houses are built, and your  
fields are yellow with harvests,  
**N**o King George of England shall drive  
you away from your homesteads,  
**B**urning your dwellings and barns, and  
stealing your farms and your  
cattle."

## Evangeline \*

Speaking these words, he blew a wrathful cloud from his nostrils,  
While his huge, brawny hand came thundering down on the table,  
So that the guests all started; and Father Felician, astounded,  
Suddenly paused, with a pinch of snuff half-way to his nostrils.  
But the brave Basil resumed, and his words were milder and gayer:—  
“ Only beware of the fever, my friends,  
beware of the fever!  
For it is not like that of our cold Aca-dian climate,  
Cured by wearing a spider hung round  
one’s neck in a nutshell!”  
Then there were voices heard at the door,  
and footsteps approaching  
Sounded upon the stairs and the floor  
of the breezy veranda.

It was the neighbouring Creoles and  
small Acadian planters,  
Who had been summoned all to the house  
of Basil the Herdsman.  
Merry the meeting was of ancient com-  
rades and neighbours:  
Friend clasped friend in his arms; and  
they who before were as strangers,  
Meeting in exile, he came straightway as  
friends to each other,  
Drawn by the gentle bond of a common  
country together.  
But in the neighbouring hall a strain of  
music, proceeding  
From the accordant strings of Michael's  
melodious fiddle,  
Broke up all further speech. Away, like  
children delighted,  
All things forgotten beside, they gave  
themselves to the maddening

## Evangeline \*

Whirl of the dizzy dance, as it swept  
and swayed to the music,  
Dreamlike, with beaming eyes and the  
rush of fluttering garments.

Meanwhile, apart at the head of the  
hall, the priest and the herdsman  
Sat, conversing together of past and  
present and future;  
While Evangeline stood like one en-  
tranced, for within her  
Olden memories rose, and loud in the  
midst of the music  
Heard she the sound of the sea, and an  
irrepressible sadness  
Came o'er her heart, and unseen she stole  
forth into the garden.  
Beautiful was the night. Behind the  
black wall of the forest,

Tipping its summit with silver, arose the moon. On the river  
Fell here and there through the branches  
a tremulous gleam of the moonlight,  
Like the sweet thoughts of love on a  
darkened and devious spirit.  
Nearer and round about her, the mani-  
fold flowers of the garden  
Poured out their souls in odours, that  
were their prayers and confessions  
Unto the night, as it went its way, like  
a silent Carthusian.  
Fuller of fragrance than they, and as  
heavy with shadows and night-dews,  
Hung the heart of the maiden. The  
calm and the magical moonlight  
Seemed to inundate her soul with in-  
definable longings,  
As, through the garden gate, and be-  
neath the shade of the oak-trees,

## Evangeline \*

Passed she along the path to the edge of  
the measureless prairie.

Silent it lay, with a silvery haze upon  
it, and fire-flies

Gleaming and floating away in mingled  
and infinite numbers.

Over her head the stars, the thoughts of  
God in the heavens,

Shone on the eyes of man, who had  
ceased to marvel and worship,

Save when a blazing comet was seen on  
the walls of that temple,

As if a hand had appeared and written  
upon them, "Upharsin."

And the soul of the maiden, between the  
stars and the fire-flies,

Wandered alone, and she cried, — "O  
Gabriel! O my beloved!

**A**rt thou so near unto me, and yet I  
cannot behold thee?

Art thou so near unto me, and yet thy  
voice does not reach me?

Ah! how often thy feet have trod this  
path to the prairie!

Ah! how often thine eyes have looked  
on the woodlands around me!

Ah! how often beneath this oak, re-  
turning from labour,

Thou hast lain down to rest, and to  
dream of me in thy slumbers.

When shall these eyes behold, these arms  
be folded about thee?"

Loud and sudden and near the note of a  
whippoorwill sounded

Like a flute in the woods; and anon,  
through the neighbouring thickets,  
Farther and farther away it floated and  
dropped into silence.

"Patience!" whispered the oaks from  
oracular caverns of darkness;

## Evangeline \*

And, from the moonlit meadow, a sigh  
responded, "To-morrow!"

Bright rose the sun next day; and all  
the flowers of the garden  
Bathed his shining feet with their tears,  
and anointed his tresses  
With the delicious balm that they bore  
in their vases of crystal.

"Farewell!" said the priest, as he stood  
at the shadowy threshold;

"See that you bring us the Prodigal  
Son from his fasting and famine,  
And, too, the Foolish Virgin, who slept  
when the bridegroom was coming."

"Farewell!" answered the maiden, and,  
smiling, with Basil descended  
Down to the river's brink, where the  
boatmen already were waiting.

Thus beginning their journey with morn-  
ing, and sunshine, and gladness,  
Swiftly they followed the flight of him  
who was speeding before them,  
Blown by the blast of fate like a dead  
leaf over the desert.  
Not that day, nor the next, nor yet the  
day that succeeded,  
Found they trace of his course, in lake  
or forest or river,  
Nor, after many days, had they found  
him; but vague and uncertain  
Rumours alone were their guides through  
a wild and desolate country;  
Till, at the little inn of the Spanish town  
of Adayes,  
Weary and worn, they alighted, and  
learned from the garrulous land-  
lord,

## Evangeline \*

That on the day before, with horses and  
guides and companions,  
Gabriel left the village, and took the  
road of the prairies.

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IV.

**F**AR in the West there lies a desert  
land, where the mountains  
Lift, through perpetual snows, their  
lofty and luminous summits.  
Down from their desolate, deep ravines,  
where the gorge, like a gateway,  
Opens a passing rude to the wheels of the  
emigrant's wagon,  
Westward the Oregon flows and the  
Walleway and Owyhee.  
Eastward, with devious course, among  
the Wind-river Mountains,  
Through the Sweet-water Valley precip-  
itate leaps the Nebraska;

## Evangeline \*

And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-  
bout and the Spanish sierras,  
Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept  
by the wind of the desert,  
Numberless torrents, with ceaseless  
sound, descend to the ocean,  
Like the great chords of a harp, in loud  
and solemn vibrations.  
Spreading between these streams are the  
wondrous, beautiful prairies,  
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in  
shadow and sunshine,  
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses  
and purple amorphas.  
Over them wander the buffalo herds,  
and the elk and the roebuck;  
Over them wander the wolves and herds  
of riderless horses;  
Fires that blast and blight, and winds  
that are weary with travel;

Over them wander the scattered tribes  
of Ishmael's children,  
Staining the desert with blood; and  
above their terrible war-trails  
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions  
majestic, the vulture,  
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain  
slaughtered in battle,  
By invisible stairs ascending and scaling  
the heavens.  
Here and there rise smokes from the  
camps of these savage marauders;  
Here and there rise groves from the  
margins of swift-running rivers;  
And the grim, taciturn bear, the ancho-  
rite monk of the desert,  
Climbs down their dark ravines to dig  
for roots by the brook-side,  
And over all is the sky, the clear and  
crystalline heaven,

## Evangeline \*

Like the protecting hand of God inverted above them.

Into this wonderful land, at the base  
of the Ozark Mountains,  
Gabriel far had entered, with hunters  
and trappers behind him.

Day after day, with their Indian guides,  
the maiden and Basil

Followed his flying steps, and thought  
each day to o'ertake him.

Sometimes they saw, or thought they  
saw, the smoke of his camp-fire

Rise in the morning air from the distant  
plain; but at nightfall,

When they had reached the place, they  
found only embers and ashes.

And, though their hearts were sad at  
times and their bodies were weary,

Hope still guided them on, as the magic  
Fata Morgana  
Showed them her lakes of light, that re-  
treated and vanished before them.

Once, as they sat by their evening fire,  
there silently entered  
Into the little camp an Indian woman,  
whose features  
Wore deep traces of sorrow, and patience  
as great as her sorrow.  
She was a Shawnee woman returning  
home to her people,  
From the far-off hunting grounds of  
the cruel Camanches,  
Where her Canadian husband, a Cou-  
reur-des-Bois, had been murdered.  
Touched were their hearts at her story,  
and warmest and friendliest wel-  
come

## Evangeline \*

Gave they, with words of cheer, and she  
sat and feasted among them  
On the buffalo meat and the venison  
cooked on the embers.  
But when their meal was done, and  
Basil and all his companions,  
Worn with the long day's march and the  
chase of the deer and the bison,  
Stretched themselves on the ground, and  
slept where the quivering fire-light  
Flashed on their swarthy cheeks, and  
their forms wrapped up in their  
blankets,  
Then at the door of Evangeline's tent  
she sat and repeated  
Slowly, with soft, low voice, and the  
charm of her Indian accent,  
All the tale of her love, with its pleas-  
ures, and pains, and reverses.

\* Evangeline

Much Evangeline wept at the tale, and  
to know that another  
Hapless heart like her own had loved  
and had been disappointed.

Moved to the depths of her soul by pity  
and woman's compassion,

Yet in her sorrow pleased that one who  
had suffered was near her,

She in turn related her love and all its  
disasters.

Mute with wonder the Shawnee sat,  
and when she had ended

Still was mute; but at length, as if a mys-  
terious horror

Passed through her brain, she spake, and  
repeated the tale of the Mowis;

Mowis, the bridegroom of snow, who  
won and wedded a maiden,

But, when the morning came, arose and  
passed from the wigwam,

## Evangeline \*

Fading and melting away and dissolving  
    into the sunshine,  
Till she beheld him no more, though  
    she followed far into the forest.  
Then, in those sweet, low tones, that  
    seemed like a weird incantation,  
Told she the tale of the fair Lilinau,  
    who was wooed by a phantom,  
That, through the pines, o'er her  
    father's lodge, in the hush of the  
twilight,  
Breathed like the evening wind, and  
    whispered love to the maiden,  
Till she followed his green and waving  
    plume through the forest,  
And nevermore returned, nor was seen  
    again by her people.  
Silent with wonder and strange surprise,  
    Evangeline listened

To the soft flow of her magical words,  
    till the region around her  
Seemed like enchanted ground, and her  
    swarthy guest the enchantress.  
Slowly over the tops of the Ozark  
    Mountains the moon rose,  
Lighting the little tent, and with a myster-  
    ious splendour  
Touching the sombre leaves, and embracing  
    and filling the woodland.  
With a delicious sound the brook rushed  
    by, and the branches  
Swayed and sighed overhead in scarcely  
    audible whispers.  
Filled with the thoughts of love was  
    Evangeline's heart, but a secret,  
Subtile sense crept in of pain and indefi-  
    nite terror,  
**As** the cold, poisonous snake creeps into  
    the nest of the swallow.

## Evangeline \*

It was no earthly fear. A breath from  
the region of spirits  
Seemed to float in the air of night; and  
she fe'l for a moment  
That, like the Indian maid, she, too, was  
pursuing a phantom.  
With this thought she slept, and the  
fear and the phantom had vanished.

Early upon the morrow the march  
was resumed; and the Shawnee  
Said, as they journeyed along,—“On  
the western slope of these moun-  
tains  
Dwells in his little village the Black  
Robe chief of the Mission.  
Much he teaches the people, and tells  
them of Mary and Jesus;  
Loud laugh their hearts with joy, and  
weep with pain, as they hear him.”

\* Evangeline

Then, with a sudden and secret emotion,  
Evangeline answered, —

“ Let us go to the Mission, for there  
good tidings await us! ”

Thither they turned their steeds; and  
behind a spur of the mountains,  
Just as the sun went down, they heard  
a murmur of voices,

And in a meadow green and broad, by  
the bank of a river,

Saw the tents of the Christians, the  
tents of the Jesuit Mission.

Under a towering oak, that stood in the  
midst of the village,

Knelt the Black Robe chief with his  
children. A crucifix fastened

High on the trunk of the tree, and over-  
shadowed by grape-vines,

Looked with its agonised face on the  
multitude kneeling beneath it.

## Evangeline \*

This was their rural chapel. Aloft,  
through the intricate arches  
Of its aerial roof, arose the chant of  
their vespers,  
Mingling its notes with the soft susur-  
rus and sighs of the branches.  
Silent, with heads uncovered, the travel-  
lers, nearer approaching,  
Knelt on the swarded floor, and joined  
in the evening devotions.  
But when the service was done, and the  
benediction had fallen  
Forth from the hands of the priest, like  
seed from the hands of the sower,  
Slowly the reverend man advanced to  
the strangers, and bade them  
Welcome; and when they replied, he  
smiled with benignant expression,  
Hearing the homelike sounds of his  
mother-tongue in the forest,

And, with words of kindness conducted them into his wigwam.

There upon mats and skins they reposed, and on cakes of the maize-ear Feasted, and slaked their thirst from the water-gourd of the teacher.

Soon was their story told; and the priest with solemnity answered:—

“ Not six suns have risen and set since Gabriel, seated

On this mat by my side, where now the maiden reposes,

Told me this same sad tale; then arose and continued his journey! ”

Soft was the voice of the priest, and he spake with an accent of kindness; But on Evangeline’s heart fell his words as in winter the snowflakes

Fall into some lone nest from which the birds have departed.

## Evangeline \*

"Far to the north he has gone," con-  
tinued the priest; "but in autumn,  
When the chase is done, will return  
again to the Mission."

Then Evangeline said, and her voice  
was meek and submissive,—

"Let me remain with thee, for my soul  
is sad and afflicted."

So seemed it wise and well unto all; and  
betimes on the morrow,  
Mounting his Mexican steed, with his  
Indian guides and companions,  
Homeward Basil returned, and Evan-  
geline stayed at the Mission.

Slowly, slowly, slowly the days suc-  
ceeded each other,—  
Days and weeks and months; and the  
fields of maize that were springing

\* Evangeline

Green from the ground when a stranger  
she came, now waving above her,  
Lifted their slender shafts, with leaves  
interlacing, and forming  
Cloisters for mendicant crows and gran-  
aries pillaged by squirrels.

Then in the golden weather the maize  
was husked, and the maidens  
Blushed at each blood-red ear, for that  
betokened a lover,  
But at the crooked laughed, and called  
it a thief in the corn-field.

Even the blood-red ear to Evangeline  
brought not her lover.

“ Patience! ” the priest would say; “ have  
faith, and thy prayer will be an-  
swered!

Look at this vigorous plant that lifts its  
head from the meadow,

## Evangeline \*

See how its leaves are turned to the  
north, as true as the magnet;  
It is the compass-flower, that the finger  
of God has suspended  
Here on its fragile stalk, to direct the  
traveller's journey  
Over the sea-like, pathless, limitless  
waste of the desert.  
Such in the soul of man is faith. The  
blossoms of passion,  
Gay and luxuriant flowers, are brighter  
and fuller of fragrance,  
But they beguile us, and lead us astray,  
and their odour is deadly.  
Only this humble plant can guide us  
here, and hereafter  
Crown us with asphodel flowers, that  
are wet with the dews of nepenthe."  
So came the autumn, and passed, and

\* Evangeline

the winter, — yet Gabriel came not;

Blossomed the opening spring, and the notes of the robin and blue-bird Sounded sweet upon wold and in wood, yet Gabriel came not.

But on the breath of the summer winds a rumour was wafted

Sweeter than song of bird, or hue or odour of blossom.

Far to the north and east, it said, in the Michigan forests,

Gabriel had his lodge by the banks of the Saginaw River.

And, with returning guides, that sought the lakes of St. Lawrence,

Saying a sad farewell, Evangeline went from the Mission.

When over weary ways, by long and perilous marches,

## Evangeline \*

She had attained at length the depths of  
the Michigan forests,  
Found she the hunter's lodge deserted  
and fallen to ruin!

Thus did the long sad years glide on,  
and in seasons and places  
Divers and distant far was seen the wan-  
dering maiden;—  
Now in the tents of grace of the meek  
Moravian Missions,  
Now in the noisy camps and battle-fields  
of the army,  
Now in secluded hamlets, in towns and  
populous cities.  
Like a phantom she came, and passed  
away unremembered.  
Fair was she and young, when in hope  
began the long journey;

\* Evangeline

Faded was she and old, when in disappointment it ended.  
Each succeeding year stole something away from her beauty,  
Leaving behind it, broader and deeper, the gloom and the shadow.  
Then there appeared and spread faint streaks of gray o'er her forehead,  
Dawn of another life, that broke o'er her earthly horizon,  
As in the eastern sky the first faint streaks of the morning.

## Evangeline \*

### V.

IN that delightful land which is  
washed by the Delaware's waters,  
Guarding in sylvan shades the name of  
Penn the apostle,  
Stands on the banks of its beautiful  
stream the city he founded.  
There all the air is balm, and the peach  
is the emblem of beauty,  
And the streets still reëcho the names  
of the trees of the forest,  
As if they fain would appease the Dryads  
whose haunts they molested.  
There from the troubled sea had Evan-  
geline landed, an exile,

Finding among the children of Penn a  
home and a country.  
There old René Leblanc had died; and  
when he departed,  
Saw at his side only one of all his hun-  
dred descendants.  
Something at least there was in the  
friendly streets of the city,  
Something that spake to her heart, and  
made her no longer a stranger;  
And her ear was pleased with the Thee  
and Thou of the Quakers,  
For it recalled the past, the old Acadian  
country,  
Where all men were equal, and all were  
brothers and sisters.  
So, when the fruitless search, the dis-  
appointed endeavour,  
Ended, to recommence no more upon  
earth, uncomplaining,

## Evangeline \*

Thither, as leaves to the light, were  
turned her thoughts and her foot-  
steps.

As from a mountain's top the rainy mists  
of the morning

Roll away, and afar we behold the land-  
scape below us,

Sun-illumined, with shining rivers and  
cities and hamlets,

So fell the mists from her mind, and  
she saw the world far below her,

Dark no longer, but all illumined with  
love; and the pathway

Which she had climbed so far, lying  
smooth and fair in the distance.

Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her  
heart was his image,

Clothed in the beauty of love and youth,  
as last she beheld him,

\* Evangeline

Only more beautiful by his deathlike  
silence and absence.  
Into her thoughts of him time entered  
not, for it was not.  
Over him years had no power; he was  
not changed, but transfigured;  
He had become to her heart as one who  
is dead, and not absent;  
Patience and abnegation of self, and  
devotion to others,  
This was a lesson a life of trial and sor-  
row had taught her.  
So was her love diffused, but, like to  
some odorous spices,  
Suffered no waste nor loss, though fill-  
ing the air with aroma.  
Other hope had she none, nor wish in  
life, but to follow  
Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred  
feet of her Saviour.

## Evangeline \*

Thus many years she lived as a Sister of  
Mercy; frequenting  
Lonely and wretched roofs in the  
crowded lanes of the city,  
Where distress and want concealed them-  
selves from the sunlight,  
Where disease and sorrow in garrets  
languished neglected.  
Night after night, when the world was  
asleep, as the watchman repeated  
Loud, through the gusty streets, that  
all was well in the city,  
High at some lonely window he saw the  
light of her taper.  
Day after day, in the gray of the dawn,  
as slow through the suburbs  
Plodded the German farmer, with  
flowers and fruits for the market,  
Met he that meek, pale face, returning  
home from its watchings.

※ Evangeline

Then it came to pass that a pestilence  
    fell on the city,  
Presaged by wondrous signs, and mostly  
    by flocks of wild pigeons,  
Darkening the sun in their flight, with  
    naught in their caws but an acorn.  
And, as the tides of the sea arise in the  
    month of September,  
Flooding some silver stream, till it  
    spreads to a lake in the meadow,  
So death flooded life, and, o'erflowing  
    its natural margin,  
Spread to a brackish lake, the silver  
    stream of existence.  
Wealth had no power to bribe, nor  
    beauty to charm, the oppressor;  
But all perished alike under the scourge  
    of his anger;—  
Only, alas! the poor, who had neither  
    friends nor attendants,

## Evangeline \*

Crept away to die in the almshouse, home  
of the homeless.

Then in the suburbs it stood, in the midst  
of meadows and woodlands; —

Now the city surrounds it; but still,  
with its gateway and wicket

Meek, in the midst of splendour, its  
humble walls seem to echo

Softly the words of the Lord: — “The  
poor ye always have with you.”

Thither, by night and by day, came the  
Sister of Mercy. The dying

Looked up into her face, and thought,  
indeed, to behold there

Gleams of celestial light encircle her  
forehead with splendour,

Such as the artist paints o'er the brows  
of saints and apostles,

Or such as hangs by night o'er a city  
seen at a distance.

Unto their eyes it seemed the lamps of  
the city celestial,  
Into whose shining gates ere long their  
spirits would enter.

Thus, on a Sabbath morn, through  
the streets, deserted and silent,  
Wending her quiet way, she entered the  
door of the almshouse.  
Sweet on the summer air was the odour  
of flowers in the garden;  
And she paused on her way to gather  
the fairest among them,  
That the dying once more might re-  
joice in their fragrance and beauty.  
Then, as she mounted the stairs to the  
corridors, cooled by the east wind,  
Distant and soft on her ear fell the  
chimes from the belfry of Christ  
Church,

## Evangeline \*

And intermingled with these, across the  
meadows were wafted

Sounds of psalms, that were sung by the  
Swedes in their church at Wicaco.

Soft as descending wings fell the calm  
of the hour on her spirit;

Something within her said,—“At  
length thy trials are ended;”

And, with light in her looks, she entered  
the chambers of sickness.

Noiselessly moved about the assiduous,  
careful attendants,

Moistening the feverish lip, and the  
aching brow, and in silence

Closing the sightless eyes of the dead,  
and concealing their faces,

Where on their pallets they lay, like  
drifts of snow by the road-side.

Many a languid head, upraised as  
Evangeline entered,

Turned on its pillow of pain to gaze  
while she passed, for her presence  
Fell on their hearts like a ray of the sun  
on the walls of a prison.

And, as she looked around, she saw how  
Death, the consoler,  
Laying his hand upon many a heart, had  
healed it for ever.  
Many familiar forms had disappeared  
in the night-time;  
Vacant their places were, or filled al-  
ready by strangers.

Suddenly, as if arrested by fear or a  
feeling of wonder,  
Still she stood, with her colourless lips  
~~wide~~ apart, while a shudder  
Ran through her frame, and, forgotten,  
the flowerets dropped from her  
fingers,

## Evangeline \*

And from her eyes and cheeks the light  
and bloom of the morning.  
Then there escaped from her lips a cry  
of such terrible anguish,  
That the dying heard it, and started up  
from their pillows.  
On the pallet before her was stretched  
the form of an old man.  
Long, and thin, and gray were the locks  
that shaded his temples;  
But, as he lay in the morning light, his  
face for a moment  
Seemed to assume once more the forms  
of its earlier manhood;  
So are wont to be changed the faces of  
those who are dying.  
Hot and red on his lips still burned the  
flush of the fever,  
As if life, like the Hebrew, with blood  
besprinkled its portals,

That the Angel of Death might see the  
sign, and pass over.

Motionless, senseless, dying, he lay, and  
his spirit exhausted

Seemed to be sinking down through in-  
finite depths in the darkness,

Darkness of slumber and death, for ever  
sinking and sinking.

Then through those realms of shade,  
in multiplied reverberations,

Heard he that cry of pain, and through  
the hush that succeeded

Whispered a gentle voice, in accents  
tender and saint-like,

“Gabriel! O my beloved!” and died  
away into silence.

Then he beheld, in a dream, once more  
the home of his childhood;

Green Acadian meadows, with sylvan  
rivers among them,

## Evangeline \*

Village, and mountain, and woodlands;  
and, walking under their shadow,  
As in days of her youth, Evangeline rose  
in his vision.

Tears came into his eyes; and as slowly  
he lifted his eyelids;  
Vanished the vision away, but Evangel-  
ine knelt by his bedside.

Vainly he strove to whisper her name,  
for the accents unuttered  
Died on his lips, and their motion re-  
vealed what his tongue would have  
spoken.

Vainly he strove to rise; and Evangel-  
ine, kneeling beside him,  
Kissed his dying lips, and laid his head  
on her bosom.

Sweet was the light of his eyes; but it  
suddenly sank into darkness,

As when a lamp is blown out by a gust  
of wind at a casement.

All was ended now, the hope, and the  
fear, and the sorrow,  
All the aching of heart, the restless, un-  
satisfied longing,  
All the dull, deep pain, and constant  
anguish of patience!  
And, as she pressed once more the life-  
less head to her bosom,  
Meekly she bowed her own, and mur-  
mured, "Father, I thank Thee!"

## Evangeline \*

**S**TILL stands the forest primeval;  
but far away from its shadow,  
Side by side, in their nameless graves,  
the lovers are sleeping.  
Under the humble walls of the little  
Catholic church-yard,  
In the heart of the city, they lie, un-  
known and unnoticed.  
Daily the tides of life go ebbing and  
flowing beside them,  
Thousands of throbbing hearts, where  
theirs are at rest and for ever,  
Thousands of aching brains, where theirs  
no longer are busy,  
Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs  
have ceased from their labours,

\* Evangeline

Thousands of weary feet, where theirs  
have completed their journey!

Still stands the forest primeval; but  
under the shade of its branches  
Dwells another race, with other cus-  
toms and language.

Only along the shore of the mournful  
and misty Atlantic  
Linger a few Acadian peasants, whose  
fathers from exile  
Wandered back to their native land to  
die in its bosom.

In the fisherman's cot the wheel and the  
loom are still busy;  
Maidens still wear their Norman caps  
and their kirtles of homespun,  
And by the evening fire repeat Evangel-  
ine's story,

## Evangeline \*

While from its rocky caverns the deep-  
voiced, neighbouring ocean  
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate an-  
swers the wail of the forest.

THE END.





